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Across the Plains by Prairie Schooner

Personal Narrative of B. F. Bonney of His Trip
to Sutter's Fort, California, in 1846, and of His
Pioneer Experiences In Oregon During the Days
of Oregon's Provisional Government

By

FRED LOCKLEY

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Recollections of Benjamin Franklin Bonney

By FRED LOCKLEY

Recently while in Mulino I spent an afternoon with B. F. Bonney. "I was christened Benjamin Franklin," said Mr. Bonney. "My father, Jarvis Bonney, was born in New York City on Oct. 14, 1793. His people were from Scotland. My mother, whose maiden name was Jane Elkins, was also born in New York City on March 11, 1809.

"My mother was my father's second wife. He had five children by his first wife and nine children by his second wife. I am the second child of the second brood. I was born in Fulton Co., Ill., on Nov. 28, 1838.

"My father was a millwright, carpenter, cabinet maker and cooper. When I was a boy flour sacks were not used, flour being shipped in barrels. My father ran a cooper shop and manufactured flour barrels near what is now called Smithfield, Ill.

"There was so much fever and ague in Illinois, father decided to move. He had heard of Oregon. The thing that decided him to come to Oregon was he had heard there were plenty of fish here. Father was a great fisherman, and while he caught pike and red horse there, he wanted to move to a country where he could catch trout and salmon.

"My father put in his spare time for some months making a strong sturdy wagon in which to cross the plains. My father's brother, Truman Bonney, after talking the matter over with my father, decided that he also would come to Oregon. He had a large family.

My father and mother, with their children, Edward, Harriet, Truman, Martha Jane, Emily, Ann and myself, started for the Willamette Valley on April 2, 1845. There

were over 3000 people who started for Oregon in the spring of 1845.

"Presley Welch was captain of one of the trains, Joel Palmer and Samuel K. Barlow being his lieutenants. Samuel Hancock was captain of another train. Both of these trains left from Independence, Mo. Another company with over 50 wagons left from St. Joe. The captain of this wagon train being A. Hackelman. Still another wagon train left St. Joe, Mo., under command of W. G. T'Vault, John Waymire being his assistant. Sol Tetherow was in command of still another wagon train.

"I was seven years old when we started for Oregon. I can well remember what a hullabaloo the neighbors set up when father said we were going to Oregon. They told him his family would all be killed by the Indians, or if we escaped the Indians we would either starve to death or drown or be lost in the desert, but father was not much of a hand to draw back after he had put his hand to the plow, so he went ahead and made ready for the trip. He built a large box in the home-made wagon and put in a lot of dried buffalo meat and pickled pork. He had made over a hundred pounds of maple sugar the preceding fall which we took along instead of loaf sugar. He also took along plenty of corn meal. At Independence, Mo., he laid in a big supply of buffalo meat and bought more coffee. He also laid in a plentiful supply of home twist tobacco. Father chewed it and mother smoked it. To this day I enjoy seeing some white-haired old lady smoking her Missouri meerschaum, as we used to call the old corn cob pipes in those days. It reminds me of my mother.

"When we passed through Independence it was merely a trading post. The Indians were camped all around and were anxious to trade buffalo robes for shirts, powder, lead and fire water, preferably the latter. Father bought four finely tanned buffalo robes of the Indians.

"There were several stores in Independence, a num-

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Fred Lockley
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ber of blacksmith shops and wagon shops as well as livery stables and hotels.

"At Independence we joined the Barlow wagon train. Barlow soon took command of the train. In those days you could size a man up, but you can't do it any more, there isn't the opportunity. Barlow had good judgment, was resourceful, accommodating and firm.

"One man in the company by the name of Gaines had a fine outfit. He had six wagons and was well to do. He settled in Polk County.

"One of the things I remember very vividly was a severe thunder storm that took place in the middle of the night. The thunder seemed almost incessant, and the lightning was so brilliant you could read by its flashes. The men chained the oxen so they would not stampede, though they were very restive. Our tents were blown down as were the covers off our prairie schooners and in less than five minutes we were wet as drowned rats. Unless you have been through it you have no idea of the confusion resulting from a storm on the plains, with the oxen bellowing, the children crying and the men shouting, the thunder rolling like a constant salvo of artillery; with everything as light as day from the lightning flashes and the next second as black as the depth of the pit.

"At Fort Hall we were met by an old man named Caleb Greenwood and his three sons; John was 22, Britain 18, and Sam 16. Caleb Greenwood, who originally hailed from Nova Scotia, was an old mountain man and was said to be over 80 years old. He had been a scout and trapper and had married a squaw, his sons being half breeds. He was employed by Captain Sutter to come to Fort Hall to divert the Oregon-bound emigrants to California. Greenwood was a very picturesque old man. He was dressed in buckskin and had a long heavy beard and used very picturesque language. He called the Oregon emigrants together the first evening we were

in Fort Hall and made a talk. He said the road to Oregon was dangerous on account of the Indians. He told us that while no emigrants had as yet gone to California, there was an easy grade and crossing the mountains would not be difficult. He said that Capt. Sutter would have ten Californians meet the emigrants who would go and that Sutter would supply them with plenty of potatoes, coffee and dried beef. He also said he would help the emigrants over the mountains with their wagons and that to every head of a family who would settle near Sutter's Fort, Captain Sutter would give six sections of land of his Spanish land grant. After Greenwood had spoken the men of our party held a pow-wow which lasted nearly all night. Some wanted to go to California, while others were against it. Barlow, who was in charge of our train, said that he would forbid any man leaving the train and going to California. He told us we did not know what we were going into, that there was a great uncertainty about the land titles in California, that we were Americans and should not want to go to a country under another flag. Some argued that California would become American territory in time; others thought that Mexico would fight to hold it and that the Americans who went there would get into a mixup and probably get killed.

"The meeting nearly broke up in a mutiny. Barlow finally appealed to the men to go to Oregon and make Oregon an American territory and not waste their time going to California to help promote Sutter's land schemes.

"Next morning old Caleb Greenwood with his boys stepped out to one side and said: 'All you who want to go to California drive out from the main train and follow me. You will find there are no Indians to kill you, the roads are better, and you will be allowed to take up more land in California than in Oregon, the climate is better, there is plenty of hunting and fishing, and the rivers are full of salmon.'

"My father, Jarvis Bonney, was the first one of the Oregon party to pull out of the Oregon train and head south with Caleb Greenwood. My uncle, Truman Bonney, followed my father, then came Sam Kinney of Texas, then came Dodson and then a widow woman named Teters, and some others. There were eight wagons in all that rolled out from the main train to go to California with Caleb Greenwood.

"The last thing those remaining in the Barlow train said to us was, 'Good-bye, we will never see you again. Your bones will whiten in the desert or be gnawed by wild animals in the mountains.'

"After driving southward for three days with Caleb Greenwood, he left us to go back to Fort Hall to get other emigrants to change their route to California. He left his three boys with us to guide us to Sutter's Fort. Sam, the youngest of the three boys, was the best pilot, though all three of them knew the country as well as a city man knows his own back yard.

"We headed southwest. I never saw better pasture than we had after leaving the main traveled road. Our oxen waxed fat and became unruly and obstreperous. After two weeks traveling we struck a desert of sand and sage brush.

"Breaking the way through the heavy sage brush was so hard on the lead team of oxen that their legs were soon bruised and bleeding, so each wagon had to take its turn at the head of the train for half a day, then drop to the rear. On this sage brush plain we found lots of prickly pears. We children were barefooted and I can remember yet how we limped across that desert, for we cut the soles of our feet on the prickly pears. The prickly pears also made the oxen lame, for the spines would work in between the oxen's hoofs.

"One day Sam came riding back as fast as he could ride and told us to corral the oxen for a big band of buffalo were on the way and would pass near us. When-

ever oxen smell fresh buffalo they go crazy. They want to join the buffalo. We got the wagons in a circle and got the oxen inside. The buffalo charged by, not far off. The Greenwood boys killed a two-year-old and a heifer calf. We had to camp there for a few hours, for our guides told us that if our oxen crossed the trail of the buffalo they would become unmanageable. It is an odd thing that when oxen smell the fresh trail of the buffalo they stop and paw and bellow as if they smelled fresh blood. If you have ever tried to stop a runaway ox team you know what hard work it is. I remember seeing on the plains a stampede of oxen which were hitched to the wagons. They tried to stop them but they had to let them run till they were tired out. Two of the oxen were killed by being dragged by the others. The men cut the throats of the two oxen, bled them and we ate them, though the meat was tough and stringy.

“While we were crossing the sage brush desert, one of the men in our party named Jim Kinney, who hailed from Texas, came upon an Indian. Kinney had a big wagon and four yoke of oxen for his provisions and bedding. He also had a spring hack pulled by a span of fine mules. His wife drove the mules while Kinney himself always rode a mule. He had a man to drive his wagon with the four yoke of Oxen. Kinney was a typical southerner. He had long black hair, long black mustache, heavy black eyebrows, and was tall and heavy, weighing about 225 pounds. He had a violent temper and was a good deal of a desperado.

“When he saw this Indian in the sage brush he called to his driver to stop. Kinney’s wagon was in the lead, so the whole train was stopped. Going to the wagon he got a pair of handcuffs and started back to where the Indian was. The Indian had no idea Kinney meant any harm to him. My father said, ‘Kinney, what are you going to do with that Indian?’ Kinney said, ‘Where I came from we have slaves. I am going to capture that

Indian and take him with me as a slave.' My father said to him, 'The first thing you know, that Indian will escape and tell the other Indians and they will kill all of us.' Kinney said, 'I generally have my way. Any man that crosses me, regrets it. I have had to kill two or three men already because they interfered with me. If you want any trouble you know how to get it.' Kinney was an individualist. He would not obey the train rules but he was such a powerful man and apparently held life so lightly that no one wanted to cross him.

"Kinney went to where the Indian was, jumped off his mule, and struck the Indian over the head. The Indian tried to escape. He put up a fight but was no match for Kinney. In a moment or two Kinney had knocked him down and gotten his hand cuffs on him and dragged him to the hack, fastened a rope around his neck, and fastened him to the hack. Kinney told his wife to hand him his black-snake whip, which she did, as she was as much afraid of him as the men were. Then he told his wife to drive on. He slashed the Indian across the naked shoulders with the black-snake whip as a hint not to pull back. The Indian threw himself on the ground and was pulled along by his neck. Kinney kept slashing him to make him get up, till finally the Indian got up and trotted along behind the hack.

"For several days Kinney rode back of the Indian, slashing him across the back with the black-snake to do what he called 'break his spirit.' After a week or ten days Kinney untied the Indian and turned him over to his ox driver, telling him to break the Indian in to drive the ox team.

"Kinney had a hound dog that was wonderfully smart. He had used him in Texas to trail runaway slaves. After two or three weeks Kinney did not tie the Indian any more at night, as he said if the Indian ran away the dog would pick up his trail and he could follow him and kill him to show the other Indians the superiority of the

white man. He said he had killed plenty of negroes and an Indian was no better than a negro.

"After the Indian had been with Kinney for over three weeks, one dark windy night he disappeared. Kinney called the Indian his man Friday. In the morning when Kinney got up he found the Indian had taken a blanket as well as Kinney's favorite Kentucky rifle—a gun he had paid \$100 for. He had also taken his powder horn, some lead, and three hams. Kinney was furious. I never saw a man in such a temper in all my life. Every one in the train rejoiced that the Indian had escaped but they all appeared to sympathize with Kinney for they were afraid of being killed if they showed any signs of satisfaction. Kinney saddled his mule, took his dog along, and started out to track the Indian. The wind had blown sand in ridges and hummocks, covering the Indian's trail. So after hunting for half a day in all directions and being unable to track him, Kinney returned to the wagon train and we started on.

"In our party were four or five young men who used to ride ahead with the Greenwood boys, sometimes in front and sometimes by the side of the wagons as a body guard. One day when John Greenwood was acting as pilot, an Indian suddenly raised from the sage brush, frightening John's horse. John had a fine riding horse, one of the best I have ever seen. As his horse reared he jerked it savagely. It nearly unseated him. Several of the young men laughed. This made John Greenwood furious. He declared he would kill the Indian for scaring his horse. John took his gun from in front of his saddle and pointed it at the Indian. The Indian threw up his hands. The young men with John remonstrated with him and told him that the Indian meant no harm and not to shoot. One of the young men called to the Indian to run. The Indian obeyed and started to run away at full speed. This was too much for John, who drew a quick bead and fired, shooting him through the

back. The Indian fell forward face downward in the sand.

"The men on horseback waited there till the others rode up, but John rode on as fast as he could go. My uncle, Truman Bonney, who was a doctor, examined the Indian, who was gasping for breath, and said he had been shot through the lungs and that it was a fatal wound.

"My mother took a quilt from our wagon and laid the dying Indian on it; she also brought him a drink of water but he shook his head and refused to drink. We drove on a mile or so and just about dusk, Caleb Greenwood and his son Sam, who were escorting some other emigrants, rode into our camp. They had come across the Indian, who was still living. Caleb Greenwood told his son Sam to shoot the Indian through the head to put him out of his misery, which he did, and they dug a hole in the sand and buried him. When Caleb Greenwood came into our camp he said, 'The man who killed that Indian must die.' He thought Kinney had killed him. My father said, 'Your son John shot him.' Greenwood told the men of the party to meet and state the full facts. When he found that his son John had not shot in self defense but had shot the Indian wantonly, he said: 'I will act as judge of this trial. I order that the murderer of the Indian be killed.' He told the men of the party that whoever saw John to shoot him on sight as they would a wild animal.

"John, who was mounted on a fine horse, rode on as fast as he could and fell in with a Mexican and in a quarrel with this Mexican over a game of cards, was stabbed and killed, so our party did not have an opportunity to carry out the orders of execution.

"At the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains we were met by ten Mexicans with a pack train consisting of flour, potatoes, dried beef and other provisions.

"We camped at the foot of the mountains for several days, waiting for other emigrants, who had turned off at

Fort Hall, to join us. After a day's traveling we came to a rim rock ledge where there was no chance to drive up, so the wagons were taken to pieces and hoisted to the top of the rim rock with ropes. The wagons were put together again, reloaded, and the oxen which had been led through a narrow crevice in the rim rock, were hitched up and we went on. Once again in the Sierras we came to a rim rock that could not be mounted, and repeated the process of hoisting the wagons up. It took us four days to reach the summit of the mountains. In going down the side of the mountains in the Sacramento valley the mountains were so steep in places that we had to cut pine trees and hitch them to the ends of the wagons to keep them from running forward on the legs of the oxen.

"At the foot of the Sierras we camped by a beautiful, ice-cold, crystal-clear mountain stream. We camped there for three days to rest the teams and let the women wash the clothing and get things fixed up.

"My sister Harriett was 14, and with my cousin, Lydia Bonney, daughter of my father's brother, Truman Bonney, myself and other boys of the party, we put in three delightful days wading in the stream. It was October and the water was low. In many places there were sand and gravel bars.

"On one of these gravel bars I saw what I thought was wheat, but when I picked them up I found they were heavy and the color of dull yellow wheat. I took one of the pieces about the size of a small pea into camp with me. Dr. R. Gildea asked me for it. That evening he came to my father and, showing him the dull yellow metal I had given him, said: 'What your boy found today is pure gold. Keep the matter to yourself; we will come back here next spring and get rich.' My father thought Dr. Gildea was a visionary and did not pay much attention to him.

"Dr. Gildea asked me to pick up all the nuggets I

could find. He gave me an ounce bottle and asked me to fill it for him. The next day we hunted along the edge of the rocks and crevices and soon filled his ounce bottle with little nuggets ranging in size from a grain of wheat to the size of a pea.

"When we arrived at the fort, Captain Sutter made us heartily welcome. He told my father the fort would accommodate twelve families and the first twelve families joining his colony would be furnished quarters there. He furnished us quarters in the fort and also gave us plenty of fresh beef, potatoes, onions, coffee and sugar. The families who joined the colony received the regular rations in accordance with the number of children in the family. He gave work to all the men who cared to work. Some of the men helped break the wild Spanish cattle to plow.

"The native method of farming was by means of crude plows drawn by two yoke of oxen. Instead of yokes, the cattle had poles lashed to their horns. They used raw-hides for chains and their method of plowing was to have one man lead the oxen and one man on each side with a long sharp stick to goad the oxen. Captain Sutter engaged my father to make ox yokes to replace the native rigging. Our men had a busy and strenuous job, breaking the native cattle to plow. They would put one of our well-broken teams in front, then put a yoke of wild steers in the middle and a well-broken American yoke of oxen in the rear. In this way our men broke twenty yoke of oxen during the winter.

"There was a large cookhouse at the fort, where we children liked to watch them doing the cooking. They cooked here for a large number of Indian laborers. In addition to the Indian workers, there were a lot of Indian boys who were being trained to work. Sutter had to keep getting new workers, as many of the Indians would die each winter of mountain fever.

"These Indian boys were fed in a peculiar way. They

ground barley for them, made it into a gruel, and emptied it into a long trough. When the big dinner bell rang the Indian boys would go to the trough and with their fingers would scrape up the porridge and eat it.

"In the middle of the fort was a big oven where the bread was baked. Near by was a well from which we all drank water. At the east end of the fort there was a pile of oak lumber. Here the Indians and other servants were punished for any infraction of the rules. The man or boy to be punished would be strapped face downward to one of the oak logs and would then be flogged on the back with a five-tailed raw-hide. Out near the gate a large bell was hung. One of the servants rang this every hour so people would know what time it was.

"So many emigrants were crowded into the fort that winter that as a result there was a good deal of sickness. In those days it was called mountain fever; now it is called typhoid fever. A large number of the natives died of this, as well as some of the emigrants, mainly children. Among those who died was Dr. Gildea. He was the one who was going back the next spring with my father to get rich picking up the gold nuggets at our old camping place. He died January 22, 1846, and as you know, two years later gold was discovered in the mill race at Sutter's Fort. My uncle, Truman Bonney, who had gone north to Oregon, remembered where we children had found the gold, so he and some others returned to our old camping place to stake out claims, but it had already been staked out, and proved to be very rich ground.

"The fall we arrived at Sutter's Fort there was a good deal of trouble about the coming of Americans to California. A Mexican officer named Castro brought up the question of the legality of foreigners coming to California without passports. The authorities at Mexican City had issued instructions that the Americans from the Sandwich Islands could come to California even

though their passports were not regular, but that the emigrants who came from Missouri or who came south from Oregon must have proper passports. The order, which was published in California on September 12, 1845, said that the coming of American families from Missouri into California was apt to cause subversion of order and complicate foreign relations with California as well as create much embarrassment, and as a consequence positive orders were issued that no more families should be permitted to come into California unless they became naturalized. Castro and Castillero came north to ask the American emigrants as to their intentions in settling in California. Castro explained to them that friendly relations had been broken off between the republic of the United States and the republic of Mexico. The emigrants promised that if they were allowed to remain till spring they would go away peacefully. Vallejo was put in charge of the Americans to see that they kept good order. Vallejo was very good to the American settlers, supplied them with provisions, and did not require them to give bonds to keep the peace.

"Sutter, himself, was more than kind to the emigrants. He was anxious to build up an American colony there and he did everything possible for the Americans.

"In the spring of 1846 a Mexican general with thirty soldiers came to the fort and said all Americans who did not care to become Spanish subjects must leave California. Late in April a meeting of the emigrants was called and the question was discussed. Most of the emigrants decided that they preferred going to Oregon rather than losing their American citizenship. Captain Sutter urged my father to stay, and told him he would give him six sections of land, but he refused. Captain Sutter gave him horses and wagons in exchange for his oxen.

"Captain Sutter wanted to have as many Americans settle there as he could get, and planned to furnish them land so they would raise wheat. He wanted to buy all

the wheat from them, as he planned to sell it to the Russian government at Sitka, Fort Wrangell, and other points in Alaska. He was a man of vision. The Russian government had given up their settlements in California; the Hudson's Bay Company were retiring from Oregon to British Columbia, and he believed he could exchange wheat for furs with the Russians in Alaska and make a fortune. He probably would have done so if gold had not been discovered in California.

"Those Americans who were unwilling to renounce their native country were required to move in the spring. We had always traveled by wagons and it was a problem how to move our families and our possessions on horseback. In the party to Oregon there were fifteen small children. Father and mother were unusually anxious to go to Oregon because my oldest brother and my sister Ann had died and were buried at Sutter's Fort. So they regarded California as unhealthy. Among the Americans were some single men who were unwilling to take the oath of allegiance to Mexico and wanted to stay in California, so they took to the hills and decided to stay anyway.

"Among the young children to be taken to Oregon was my sister, Ellen Francisco, who had been born at Sutter's Fort and who was only a few months old. There were no roads to Oregon, so the children had to go on horseback. An old Scotchman solved the problem by making pack saddles with arms fifteen inches high. He wove raw-hide strands around this framework, making a regular basket. Two children could be placed in each one of these pack saddles without any danger of their falling out. I will never forget the exciting forenoon we spent when we started from the fort. Many of the horses were not saddle broken and when the children were put in these high pack saddles the horses would run and buck. At first many of the children set up a terrible clamor, but when they found they were not spilled out,

they greatly enjoyed the excitement. Their mothers were frantic. After running for miles the horses were rounded up by the Mexicans who were to accompany us part of the way northward.

“Captain Sutter furnished each family with a fat beef animal and he also sent ten Mexicans with us to drive our loose stock and to teach our men to pack. The Mexicans were supposed to go with us about 250 miles to where Col. Freemont was camped. When we reached the camp we found Col. Freemont had gone to Southern California to join the American forces there. We camped at Freemont’s camp while the Mexicans killed our beeves and dried the meat for us. They told us we could follow the old Hudson’s Bay trappers’ trail northward to Oregon.

After traveling a few days northward from Freemont’s camp we came to a beautiful lake beside which was a clover meadow. We camped there for the night. The young man who took the horses out to pasture found near the lake an Indian girl about eight years old. The little girl was perfectly nude, her long black hair was matted and she was covered with sores from head to feet. She could only make a pitiful moaning noise. Dr. Truman Bonney, my uncle, examined her and said she was suffering from hunger and that the flies had almost eaten her up. Near by we could see where two tribes of Indians had fought. She had apparently crept to one side out of danger and had been left. She had been living on clover roots and grass. A council among the men was held to see what should be done with her. My father wanted to take her along; others wanted to kill her and put her out of her misery. Father said that would be wilful murder. A vote was taken and it was decided to do nothing about it, but to leave her where we found her. My mother and my aunt were unwilling to leave the little girl. They stayed behind to do all they could for her. When they finally joined us their eyes were red

and swollen from crying and their faces were wet with tears. Mother said she had knelt down by the little girl and had asked God to take care of her. One of the young men in charge of the horses felt so badly about leaving her, he went back and put a bullet through her head and put her out of her misery.

"A few days later we came to an Indian camp. The Indians were subsisting on dried acorns and crickets. The crickets were very large. The way they prepared them was to catch the crickets, pull off their legs so they could not hop away, pile them in the sun and let them dry, then mix them with the acorns, put them all together in a stone mortar and make a sort of bread out of them. The Indians gave us some of this black bread which looked like fruit cake but had a different taste. Some of we children ate it, while others were rather squeamish about it and did not care for it.

"That evening an Indian came to camp bringing an Indian boy about twelve years old. Allan Sanders traded a Pinto pony for the boy. He cut the Indian boy's long hair, bought him clothing from one of the other members of the party, and named the boy Columbus. The first night Columbus was very unhappy, but after Sanders had given him a sound thrashing he seemed more contented. He reached Oregon safely but a few years later died from the measles.

"A few days' travel northward from where Sanders had bought Columbus, we were attacked by the Indians. When night had fallen our party moved back into the brush about 50 yards from where we had camped. The men put the packs in a circle to protect the women and children. The nine men who had guns crept out to the bank of the stream where they believed the Indians would cross. When everything was still the Indians started to cross the stream. Our men gave them a volley and the other men, who had cut clubs, with a loud yell splashed into the stream after the Indians, and the Indians dis-

appeared. The next morning the men found plenty of blood along the trail where they had gone but did not find any bodies of Indians.

"We reached Rogue River valley, in Southern Oregon, early in June. I never saw a more beautiful valley. The grass-covered hills were dotted with deer and elk. The streams were full of trout, and there was not only plenty of wood and water, but there were many little open spots and prairies. Several of our party decided to settle right there.

"Captain Levi Scott settled on the Umpqua and founded the town of Scottsburg. Eugene Skinner built a cabin at the foot of a butte now called Skinner's Butte, and by it the town of Eugene now stands. The rest of our party continued on down to the Willamette Valley and reached Oregon City on June 16, 1846. My father, who was a cooper and millwright, got a job coopering for Mr. Fellows, while my mother secured work from Governor Abernethy.

"The missionary association in the East had sent a large amount of clothing and other goods for the Indian students. The dresses were cut out but not made. The boys' clothing was also cut out but not sewed, the intention being to have the Indians in the manual training school do the work. The mission school, however, had been abandoned, so Governor Abernethy had the goods. He told my mother if she would finish knitting the stockings, make the dresses and finish the boys' clothing, she could have one-half of all she finished. Mother soon had all her children outfitted with new clothing and also made other dresses and suits, which she sold, Governor Abernethy of course selling his half.

"Dr. John McLoughlin of Vancouver employed my father to go to Champoege to repair a grist mill there. He furnished father a bateau with eight Indian oarsmen to take his family to Champoege. We landed near the old Indian landing near where the monument to the provis-

ional government now stands. We stayed there that winter while father worked on the mill. The winter of 1846 was one of the coldest that the oldest settlers of Oregon could remember. Hundreds of head of wild cattle and Indian horses died as they couldn't get at the dried grass beneath the snow.

"In the fall of 1847 we moved to our donation land claim two miles east of where the town of Hubbard now stands.

"Among my pleasant memories of our stay in Oregon City was playing with a playmate, a son of Col. W. G. T'Vault, the first editor of the *Oregon Spectator* at Oregon City, the first paper to be published west of the Rocky Mountains. One day young T'Vault and I were walking along the streets of Oregon City when we met Dr. McLoughlin and Mr. Barlow. Barlow had a plane bit in his hands. Dr. McLoughlin put his hand on my head and said: 'Don't you boys want to earn some candy? If you will go with Mr. Barlow and turn the grind stone while he sharpens that plane bit, I will give you each a handful of candy.' As soon as Mr. Barlow had pronounced the bit sharp enough we hurried back to Dr. McLoughlin and he gave us each a handful of plain candy hearts with mottoes on them. That was the first store candy we had ever eaten, or for that matter had ever had in our hands.

"Another recollection of Oregon City is going with my cousin, Wisewell Bonney, and young T'Vault to the building which was used as a mint. The men there would melt the gold dust on a blacksmith's forge, pour it into molds, roll it through a roller and keep rolling it till the bars were thin, when they would stamp \$5 and \$10 gold pieces out of the gold bars. They had a beaver on one side and were called Beaver money. They manufactured about \$30,000 worth of \$10 coins and \$25,000 worth of \$5 coins. By accident they made them too heavy, so they were worth more than five or ten dollars, so when

the people got them they would melt them up or send them to the mint. That is why they are so scarce now.

"My uncle, Truman Bonney, settled at Hubbard. He was what was known in those days as a calomel and quinine doctor, as that is what he prescribed for everything that ailed people.

"My father died in 1854. Shortly thereafter my mother married Orlando Bidwell. Our claim joined A. R. Dimmick's claim. John Dimmick, father of Grant Dimmick, and I went to school together. The first time I ever saw the inside of a school house was when I was 14 years old.

"In those days they used to have big times at the barn raisings. When Dimmick's barn was built it was christened the Queen of the French Prairie because it was the biggest barn on the prairie. Neighbors, with their ox teams, came for twenty miles around to help at the barn raising. One incident of that barn raising I remember very distinctly. There was a man there named Zack Fields who offered to bet a \$5 Beaver coin that no one could raise his head from the ground by his ears. It looked as if it would be easy, but when a man put up a five-dollar gold piece Zack greased his ears so the man's fingers would slip off, and Zack won the bet.

"Father paid \$12 each and sent five of us children to school there. The teachers didn't have to know much about books, but had to be able to whip the big boys. I saw a teacher tackle George Dimmick, who was 18 years old. It was a battle royal, for George put up a big scrap. The teacher wore out a six-foot hazel rod on him.

"I put in most of my time making cedar shingles. My father's donation land claim on the Pudding river bottom had forty acres of fine timber on it. We split our cedar timbers for both Ford's and Kiser's houses. We got \$10 per thousand for the cedar shingles. People came from all over Mission Bottom and French Prairie to buy shingles of us.

"The first time I was married I was married to Catherine M. Rhoades, who was fifteen years old. We were married on February 11, 1864, at Champoege, by Rev. T. B. Litchenthaer of the United Brethren church. We had nine children, seven of whom are still living. You will know we shifted around a good bit when I tell you that these nine children were born in seven different houses.

"My second wife was Louise Coats. We were married at Tygh Valley in Eastern Oregon by Rev. Roland Brown. My third wife was a widow with five children. Her name was Mrs. Emma J. Lamb. We were married at Oregon City by County Judge Grant Dimmick, the son of my former schoolmate.

"When I was a young man I worked as a carpenter and bricklayer. Then I got into a sort of peculiar business. I would take up a squatter's right on a piece of land, build a good house on it, and sell it to someone who wanted to homestead on the land.

"In 1861 I went to the Orofino mines in Idaho and had fair success. Some little time after the Civil war I decided to be a preacher. For eleven years I preached on the circuit from Dufur in Eastern Oregon to Goldendale, Washington. Later I preached in British Columbia, and still later I had a circuit in the Puget Sound country.

"When I tell my grandchildren about the old days, about the plains being dark with vast herds of buffalo, about the Indians and the mining camps, they look at me as if they thought I could not be telling the truth. Those old days are gone forever and the present generation can never know the charm and romance of the old West."

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